

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 26, 2006. Claims 1, 2 and 445-47 are present in the application. The non-elected claims, Claims 4-25, 27-31, 33-37 and 39-43, have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Independent Claims 26, 32 and 38 have been rewritten as new Claims 45-47, respectively, to place them in correspondence with Claim 1, which has been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. The dependency of Claim 44 has been changed accordingly. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1, 2, 26, 32, 38 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,956,698 (Lacheze).

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a management system, connected to a communication line, for managing maintenance of a plurality of printing apparatuses. The system of Claim 1 comprises a reception unit that receives a first ID for specifying a first printing apparatus having use history information showing that the first printing apparatus was managed, and a second ID for specifying a second printing apparatus as a new apparatus to be managed. The first ID and the second ID are different from each other, and are transmitted via the communication line. Also provided is a search unit that searches for first information related to a contract corresponding to the first ID received by the reception unit, and a generation unit generates second information related to a contract for the second printing apparatus to be newly managed, based on the first information.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite even more clearly that the generation unit, based on the searched first information related to the contract for the first ID, generates the second information related to the contract for the second printing apparatus that is to be newly managed.

Lacheze relates to a system that handles accounting information related to use of a printing system. In particular, a set of accounting information is updated when a billable portion of a print job is performed, and the updated set of information is analyzed to determine whether a particular, selected event has occurred. If the determination is affirmative, then a specific set of billing or pricing information is automatically transmitted to a location selected by the customer. The selected event is defined by the customer, and the information sent is particularly contemplated to be a set of billing information, essentially an invoice for the work done.

The Office Action cites Fig. 5 of *Lacheze* as showing operation like that of the generation unit recited in Claim 1. This figure merely teaches providing a report (step 378) that includes all of requested entries for a given job (col. 10, line 67, to col. 11, line 2). Applicants submit that such teaching does not teach or suggest the recited generation unit, which “generates second information related to a contract for the second printing apparatus to be newly managed, based on the first information searched for by said search unit”. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 1 is allowable over that patent.

Independent Claims 45-47 are, respectively, method, computer memory medium and program claims corresponding to system Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or the other of independent Claims 1 and 45, and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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